

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-19 are pending in this application. Claims 11-15 and 17-19 are allowed. By this Amendment, claims 1, 7-10 and 16 are amended and claim 6 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, in subject matter of the original claims and in the present specification at paragraph [0007]. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims at least in light of the following remarks.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Safaipour at the interview held October 23, 2007, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

Claims 7 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 112, 1st paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the amendments to claims 7 and 16 set forth above.

Claims 1-3 and 5 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi et al. (US 5,485,245) ("Kobayashi"), and further in view of Kinoshita et al. (US 2003/0107762) ("Kinoshita"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Independent claim 1 is amended to include the features of claim 6 and accordingly is allowable, as indicated in the Office Action. Further, claims 2, 3 and 5 depend on claim 1 and are therefore likewise allowable for at least that reason, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of Kinoshita, and further in view of Leong (US D462,971). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 4 depends on claim 1 and is therefore allowable for at least that reason, as well as for the additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of Kinoshita, and further in view of Gennetten (US 2004/0201774). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

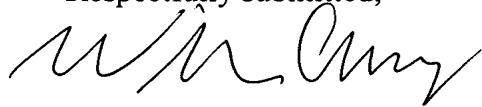
Claim 7 depends on claim 1 and is therefore allowable for at least that reason, as well as for the additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 6 and 8-10 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 6 is canceled. Claims 8-10 are rewritten in independent form and are therefore allowable. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:WEC

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